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## NAVAL WAR COLLEGE Newport, RI

# SO WHOSE SWORD IS THIS ANYWAY? APPLYING THE THREE LEVELS OF WAR TO CONFLICT TERMINATION.

By

George H. Baker, Jr. CAPT USN

A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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18 May 2004	
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Carl Von Clausewitz

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Carl Von Clausewitz realized that the ultimate aim in any war is to achieve a lasting peace. History shows that military victory is only a means that can lead to a lasting peace, and is not an end in itself. If the greater goal in war is not military victory but to achieve a lasting peace, then what framework guides the Operational Commander to achieve this end?

Joint Doctrine discusses three levels of war but fails to apply this concept to enemy surrender (conflict termination<sup>ii</sup>). The three levels of war correlate to a framework of three different levels of surrender; tactical, operational, and strategic surrender. The Operational Commander can use this framework to differentiate between three significantly different situations and respond appropriately. The Operational Commander is well equipped to deal with tactical and operational surrenders. However, strategic surrender requires a combined Political-Military effort to be properly executed.

Wars throughout history have ended in both operational and strategic surrenders.

Wars that end in an operational surrender must be converted to a strategic surrender.

Otherwise, as history shows, the lasting peace is seriously jeopardized.

#### TACTICAL SURRENDER

The battle for Little Round Top in the second day of fighting at Gettysburg is one example of a tactical surrender. The Union line extended for nearly three miles from Cemetery Ridge to a hill known as Little Round Top. Rather than concentrate his effort in a frontal attack on the main Union forces at Cemetery Ridge, General Robert E. Lee sent two

Alabama regiments in a flanking assault at the end of the Union line at Little Round Top.

Meeting the stubborn resistance of Colonel Joshua L. Chamberlain and the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine regiment, the Confederate forces failed to achieve their objective. Chamberlain, his men exhausted and nearly out of ammunition, led a heroic bayonet charge down Little Round Top, destroying the Confederate will and capturing an enemy force nearly twice his own. At the day's end, the Union position on Little Round Top remained secure. iii

Chamberlain's offensive actions ended the fighting that day at Little Round Top. The three-day Battle of Gettysburg, however, was far from over. Lee's main army was still poised at Cemetery Ridge, which would be the site of Pickett's Charge the next day. The fighting at Little Round Top ended in a tactical surrender.

In this regard, a tactical surrender is a localized end of hostilities. It signals the achievement of a tactical objective which may lead to operational or strategic gains. But the battle is still ongoing and military operations continue.

#### OPERATIONAL SURRENDER

On September 1, 1870, during the Franco-Prussian war, the Prussians defeated the French Army of Châlons at Sedan. During the surrender negotiations, Bismarck questioned whose sword was it that the Emperor, Napoleon III, had surrendered? Was it the personal sword of Napoleon III or was it the sword of France? "For if it was that of France then the whole situation was different; it would not be the French army alone which was surrendering but the French State." The reply that the Emperor's surrender was purely personal marked the end of negotiations at Sedan.

The Germans had taken 21,000 prisoners during the battle, and to these 81,000 were now added. In addition they captured over 1,000 wagons,

6,000 horses, and 419 guns. Their own losses during the battle came to 9,000 officers and men. . . . France's first-line army was still trapped in Metz; the second-line army had ceased to exist.  $^{\rm vi}$ 

Two days after the French defeat, the Germans sent Napoleon III off to captivity in the palace of Wilhelmshöhe. As his train of wagons drove off,

... both Moltke and Bismarck watched the carriage drive away. Moltke wondered, a little tortuously, whether Napoleon might have devised the whole operation to secure his untroubled retreat from his responsibilities. Bismarck merely remarked reflectively, "There goes a dynasty on its way out." Then they both returned to the *gigantic problems* which their victory had set them to solve. Vii [emphasis added]

Had Napoleon III surrendered the sword of France, the Prussian Army would have won the war in a strategic surrender at Sedan. As it was, the French operational surrender produced an operational victory for the Prussians. They still had to deal with the "gigantic problems" of the French forces at Metz and the nation's capitol at Paris. The Franco-Prussian war would continue for another five months.

In this regard, the operational surrender of Napoleon III during the Franco-Prussian war marked an end to regional hostilities. Operational surrender implies achievement of operational objectives which may lead to strategic gains. But the war is still ongoing and military operations continue.

#### STRATEGIC SURRENDER

World War II ended with the Japanese surrender in the summer of 1945. The Soviet Union's entry into the war against Japan and the news of a second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki convinced Emperor Hirohito that Japan must accept the Potsdam declaration. On August 15, 1945, the Emperor publicly announced his decision to surrender. This case illustrates a strategic surrender. It was a capitulation involving the three elements of the

Clausewitzian triangle; the people element, the military element, and the government element. ix

Clausewitz argues that in war, "the ultimate objective . . . is to bring about peace." If "war is an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will," then war can be represented as a clash of Clausewitzian triangles, each trying to destroy the other. In this sense, only a capitulation involving all three elements of the Clausewitzian triangle can lead to a lasting peace. In a strategic surrender, all three elements of the enemy triangle are either captured or destroyed – a necessity to ensure a lasting peace. Otherwise, like an ocean crab, the damaged leg will rejuvenate and the conflict will begin anew.

In the simpler days of Carl Von Clausewitz, it was possible for the military commander to singlehandedly negotiate a strategic surrender. Clausewitz was writing mainly about Napoleon I, and Napoleon I was both the Emperor of France and the commander-inchief of the French military. This led Clausewitz to state that "To bring a war . . . to a successful close requires a thorough grasp of national policy. On that level strategy and policy coalesce: the commander-in-chief is simultaneously a statesman."

In modern democracies, the military and government components of the Clausewitzian triangle are distinctively separate. It is unlikely that the President of the United States would ever lead troops into battle as did Napoleon I. This makes it even more important for the Operational Commander to remain focused on war's ultimate end, capitulation of all three elements of the enemy's Clausewitzian triangle (or strategic surrender). The Operational Commander's military victory is only a means that can lead to that end.

Michael Handel wrote,

"[Clausewitz] states that even if one side achieves a military victory, such a victory is rarely final. This is because the defeated enemy who does not accept the result will simply wait for a better time to fight again. Consequently, the maximum use of military force is only a necessary but not a sufficient condition for final victory; diplomacy and political wisdom are the "missing ingredients" needed to consolidate the results achieved in battle. In reality, therefore, it is wiser to rely on the combination of adequate [military] strength and diplomacy."xiii

This was implicit recognition that winning the peace requires destroying the will to fight in all three elements of the enemy's Clausewitzian triangle, and that that action was best accomplished through combined Political-Military efforts. In other words, peace negotiations singlehandedly carried out by the Operational Commander are inappropriate. Similarly, peace negotiations carried out singlehandedly by diplomats are also inappropriate. Negotiating a strategic surrender should always be carried out by a combined Political-Military effort. Otherwise, the peace is at risk. It may seem obvious, but the answer to the question "So whose sword is this anyway?" is critical to the follow-on actions of the Operational Commander.

Destroying the will to fight does not imply death. Regarding the enemy's military, Clausewitz states "...they must be put in such a condition that they can no longer carry on the fight. Whenever we use the phrase "destruction of the enemy's forces" this alone is what we mean." Similarly, destroying the will of the government element and the people element also does not imply death.

### **Destroy or Capture?**

If Clausewitz set the focus on *destroying* the enemy's *forces*, it may be argued that today requires a more positive approach by attempting to *capture* the will of the enemy's

government and people elements. Once the enemy's fighting forces have been destroyed, Clausewitz advises, "The country must be occupied: otherwise the enemy could raise fresh military forces." This is where the focus of the Operational Commander is to *capture* the remaining two elements of the enemy's Clausewitzian triangle; the government and the people elements.

#### **The Government Element**

In Japan following World War II,

... the critical question became whether or not to retain the head of state. Resolution of this question would determine whether U.S. occupation forces encountered serious resistance. Ultimately, occupation planners recommended retaining the Emperor to ensure the cooperation of the Japanese people. xvi

Examining the context of the Emperor's surrender radio broadcast to the Japanese people (see Appendix A) reveals indeed the Emperor played a very significant role in capturing the will of the Japanese people element for Allied forces. Since the Emperor already had *political competence* and was willing to work with occupation forces, Allied efforts to rebuild Japan were given a huge head start. In this single decision to retain the Emperor, the Allies had effectively captured the will of the government element as well as a bridge to the people element in the Japanese Clausewitzian triangle.

#### **Political Competence – Burden or Bridge?**

"Political competence means the degree to which . . . [the] leadership is committed, uncorrupt, and disciplined, as well as whether it commands sufficient loyalty and obedience from subordinate institutions and agents that its strategy can actually be carried out." This

definition implies aspects of both legitimacy and authority. Joint Publication 3-0 defines legitimacy as the ability to "sustain the willing acceptance by the people of the right of the government to govern . . . ." Simply put, legitimacy implies having the support (i.e. the will) of the people. If the enemy government is destroyed, then building a new government with some degree of political competence can require considerable effort and take years to complete. However, if the situation allows, retaining significant elements of the original enemy government can mitigate and even eliminate the burden of building political competence for the new postwar government. Further, a government of familiar faces can provide a "bridge" to capturing the will of the people as was the case in Japan following World War II.

The Franco-Prussian War benchmarked the requirement for political competence.

Two days after Napoleon III's surrender at the battle of Sedan, the French organized "a new Government of National Defense" formed from Deputies elected by Parisian officials. \*\*

After some initial organizational effort,

... the new Government felt strongly that their authority needed a stronger moral basis... if they were to make peace, carry on the war, or gain the recognition of the [world] Powers. In consequence, they demanded that elections should be held as soon as possible ... so long as there seemed a chance of gaining reasonable peace-terms from the enemy ... [as] only a Government fully authorized by public support and international recognition could sign a treaty of peace.<sup>xx</sup>

The new French Government of National Defense realized its need for political competence in September, 1870. Political competence is a necessary requirement for an official body to represent the government element in the strategic surrender framework. The Operational Commander who destroys an enemy regime as part of a military campaign takes on the added burden of creating a new government and establishing its political

competence as part of the effort to achieve a strategic surrender. By contrast, the Operational Commander who by circumstances can capture the will of at least some elements of the enemy regime as part of a military campaign is much closer to realizing a strategic surrender.

#### **The People Element**

In addition to exploiting an indigenous government, there are other ways the Operational Commander can reach the people element of the enemy's Clausewitzian triangle.

Again, we draw lessons directly from Germany and Japan post World War II.

The U.S. occupations of Germany and Japan met very little resistance. Critical to this are a number of factors. First, U.S. occupation forces provided extensive support to the occupied populations, including money to rebuild their war ravaged countries and emergency relief supplies. Second, they respected local cultures and institutions. Although U.S. forces exercised firm control, they did so in a manner that did not humiliate the conquered peoples. Third, they built solid democratic institutions and immediately provided for cooperative government with local officials. Fourth, and perhaps more importantly, they did not engage in mass reprisals against the German and Japanese people. Rather, they sought justice through legal process in the Nuremberg and Tokyo War Crimes Tribunals and discarded the failed cycle of atrocity and revenge. \*\*xxii\*\*

Information Operations also played a significant role in capturing the will of the people element.

Behind the rapid sequence of reforms there was yet another mobilization of information that aimed to reshape the attitudes of Japanese citizens. Throughout Japan's prefectures, knowledge of America's political system, history, literature, and society was spread through scores of reading rooms and information centers. There were films and broadcasts and even scrolling manipulators of coloured picture cards – all promoting democracy, peace, and rural reconstruction. xxiii

There are many actions the Operational Commander may take during conflict and post conflict phases of the war that directly affect winning the peace. In seeking military victory, the Operational Commander should always keep the larger goal of strategic surrender in mind. The Operational Commander who is solely focused on defeating the enemy's military is seeking only an operational surrender.

#### WORLD WAR I VIEWED AS AN OPERATIONAL SURRENDER

The fighting in World War I ended with an armistice signed on November 11, 1918. \*\*\*

Many historians view World War II as a failure of the peace effort ending World War I. If we assume this to be true, can the strategic surrender framework explain why the peace following World War I was compromised from the start?

First we begin by looking at how World War I ended. On November 7, 1918, Germany began armistice negotiations with President Woodrow Wilson. \*\*xv\*\* Realizing the end was near, Kaiser Wilhelm II further maneuvered to make the unexpected news of defeat more bearable to the German people. He signed a decree on November 9<sup>th</sup> abdicating his throne and establishing a German Republic. \*\*xv\*\* The newly designated chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, was immediately confronted by General Ludendorff of the German High Staff with a demand for an instant end to the war. Since the General carried the full support of the Reichstag majority, the newly appointed German chancellor capitulated and sued for peace. For reasons of military security, the army's true status was never revealed to the German public. \*\*xxv\*\* This omission later contributed to the false legend of the "unbeaten [German] army in the field. \*\*xxxv\*\* The newly appointed German government was later unjustly blamed for selling out Germany. Given the later-developed Nazi "stab in the back" myth regarding Prince Max's newly appointed government, an Allied invasion into Germany would have indisputably demonstrated the truthful demise of the German army. \*\*xxix\*\*

Additionally, the protracted war had taken a significant toll on the German people. By 1916, food shortages had affected worker productivity. By 1918, the number of workers absent due to sickness had doubled. Nationwide strikes erupted with workers demanding food and better working conditions. Falling wartime production correlated with the depreciating quality of food and material. If exhaustion of German manpower in the trenches on the Western front was the hammer that defeated the Kaiser's Germany, then the poor state of supply and morale of the German people on the home front provided the anvil. The German people embraced the armistice in the hope of relief from the [food] blockade. But the armistice left the blockade intact. Though they were ready to end the war, postwar events would erode the relationship between the German people and their postwar government.

How does the end of World War I fit in the strategic surrender framework? Looking at the government element, the case could be made that the German government, headed by its newly designated chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, lacked political competence. Though Prince Max had authority in that he was appointed by the Kaiser, did he really carry the will of the German people? Based on the postwar reaction of the German people toward its newly appointed government, the answer is a resounding "no." Therefore, when the newly appointed Prince Max offered the sword of Germany to the Allies, the Allies failed to realize that, in truth, the sword of Germany was not his to offer, no more than the newly appointed French Government of National Defense could initially offer the sword of France to end the Franco-Prussian War nearly half a century earlier. Both governments lacked the political competence needed to negotiate a strategic surrender.

Furthermore, looking at the Armistice negotiations following World War I through the lens of strategic surrender, the Allies failed to capture the people element. Rather than provide

postwar relief effort, the Allies maintained the food blockade to force Germany into signing the Treaty of Versailles. Not only did this measure distance the German people from accepting the postwar peace, but an unintended consequence of maintaining the blockade was to collapse the German economy and destabilize the very government that had signed the peace treaty. Additionally, the famous "War Guilt Clause" (Clause 231) included in the Treaty of Versailles held Germany solely responsible for starting the war and required her to pay full reparations for all of its damages. Instead of capturing the government and people elements needed for a strategic surrender, Allied actions accomplished the exact opposite.

In summary, World War I ended with a peace demand initiated by the German military, offered by a German government that lacked political competence, and implemented in a way that alienated the German people. This was an *operational* surrender. It signaled the end of major combat operations on the Western Front. The operational surrender was significant in that it included the entire military element of the Clausewitzian triangle, but it lacked the full representation of both the government and people elements. Had the Allies of World War I used a framework of seeking a strategic surrender, they would have recognized a need for further operations designed to capture a politically competent government element in addition to capturing the will of the German people either directly through occupation efforts or indirectly through economic relief.

As this case implies, converting an operational surrender into a strategic surrender requires both political and military effort. As it was, these combined efforts were Michael Handel's "missing ingredients" needed to consolidate the results achieved in battle and ensure a lasting peace. More importantly, this case illustrates the dire consequences of

ending a war at the operational surrender level. This is exactly what Clausewitz was eluding to when he stated that in war the result is not always to be regarded as final. xxxv

#### IRAQ – A CURRENT APPLICATION

Speaking on the deck of a homebound US aircraft carrier, President George W. Bush announced Thursday [May 1, 2003] that the "major combat operations" in Iraq have ended and the US-led forces "have prevailed." He said the political reconstruction in Iraq will take time and the allied troops will stay in the oil-rich country until the "work is done." xxxvi

The Iraqi military was defeated, the despotic Iraqi political element was eliminated, and the Iraqi people went on a looting spree. Like World War I before it, Operation Iraqi Freedom ended in an operational surrender. Unlike the Allies of World War I, the Bush Administration realized in advance that defeat of the Iraqi military would not be the end of the war. The President's goals of establishing a democratic government in Iraq and rebuilding the Iraqi nation were consistent with the framework of achieving a strategic surrender. Additionally, the President's warning that "the political reconstruction in Iraq will take time" was consistent with the "burden" aspect of establishing political competence for a new government.

Again, converting an operational surrender into a strategic surrender requires both political and military effort. As experience continues to prove on a daily basis, the Operational Commander's task in Iraq did not end with the battlefield victory – not when the goal was to achieve a lasting peace. Assuming the Political-Military efforts are successful in establishing an Iraqi government imbued with political competence, the remaining task will be to capture the will of the people. Everything that Army General John P. Abizaid,

Commander, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) does should support the goal of capturing the two remaining elements needed for a strategic surrender.

On a positive note, Coalition Forces are determined to begin transferring sovereignty over to an Iraqi government on June 30, 2004. Once the Iraqi people begin to recognize the new Iraqi government as an instrument of real Iraqi power (as opposed to a puppet for Coalition Forces), the "bridge" aspect of political competence should begin to work in CENTCOM's favor and accelerate capturing the people element.

Some individuals in the United States claim that the situation in Iraq is untenable; that to achieve our war aims in Iraq, "America must abandon its dream of victory and accept the appearance of defeat." In a <u>Washington Post</u> article, John Brady Kiesling (a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Foreign Service) stated that the United States should choose a promising Iraqi resistance leader, build him up while we destroy his competition, and then pull out of Iraq completely. The New Iraqi leader will enter Baghdad in triumph, will seek the United Nation's aid in Iraqi reconstruction, and will establish a stable Iraqi government. In the second state of the U.S. Foreign Service is a stable Iraqi government.

Unfortunately for those calling for an immediate and complete withdrawal from Iraq, the framework of strategic surrender portrays striking similarities between the situation in Iraq today and that the Allies faced with Germany following World War I – in both cases major combat operations ended with operational surrenders. History shows that the best opportunity to achieve a lasting peace in the Iraqi situation is to remain in Iraq as long as it takes to convert the operational surrender into a strategic surrender. Without taking such action, we risk repeating the very history that produced World War II.

#### LIBERATORS OR OCCUPIERS? RESTORE OR REPLACE?

Due to the brutal nature of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, many believed that

Coalition Forces would be welcomed as liberators by the Iraqi people. During the early
stages of the conflict, the San Diego Union Tribune featured an article titled "Iraqis Greet

Advancing Marine Units as Liberators." That vision of being welcomed as liberators later
proved incorrect. Why?

Following the Normandy Invasion of World War II, the Allies ousted an occupying German force, allowing the French to restore its original government. Allied forces were welcomed as liberators by the French people. Following the Japanese unconditional (i.e. strategic) surrender in World War II, our purpose in Japan was to replace its original government with one of our design. American forces were recognized and treated as occupiers in Japan following World War II.

In Iraq today, Coalition Forces are also in an occupational role as they struggle to establish security. If World War II Japan ended in a strategic surrender and Operation Iraqi Freedom ended in an operational surrender, then what exactly <u>do</u> the two occupational scenarios have in common?

When we compare the liberators of France with the occupiers of Japan and Iraq through the framework of strategic surrender, the difference between being welcomed as liberators and being viewed as occupiers appears to center on postwar intentions toward the enemy's prewar government. If the intention is to *restore* the prewar government, then we can expect to be viewed as *liberators*. If our intention is to *replace* the prewar government with one of our design, then we can expect to be viewed as *occupiers*. Further, as a comparison of the Japan and Iraq scenarios illustrate, the more radical the change from the

prewar government, the more difficult the task to capture a politically competent government element and the people element needed for a strategic surrender.

Of significance, this effect of liberators versus occupiers appears to be independent of the relationship between the enemy government and its people. The Japanese Emperor was revered by his people whereas Saddam Hussein, a brutal dictator, was for the most part feared by his people. The harshness of the relationship between Saddam and his people led many to conclude that Coalition Forces would be welcomed as liberators. One explanation why this assumption proved false might be a general human tendency to resist change. Many might prefer to deal with "the Devil they do know" rather than submit to "the Devil they don't." In any case, history shows that the question of "liberators or occupiers" is centered on the postwar goal of "restore or replace" (with respect to the enemy's regime).

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Extending the three levels of war (Tactical, Operational, and Strategic) to conflict termination produces a framework that helps to make a complicated area of warfare more understandable. When war is viewed through the lens of tactical, operational, and strategic surrender, the Operational Commander remains focused on the war's ultimate end: to achieve a lasting peace.

The Operational Commander can also use this framework to anticipate if his forces will be viewed as liberators or occupiers. Anticipating this end state characteristic can influence priorities during the conflict. For example, wartime collateral damage, though significant for a liberating force, takes on increased consequence for an occupying force. Unlike the liberating force, the occupying force has the additional burden of capturing the

will of the people. Too much collateral damage during earlier phases of the war can increase the difficulty of capturing the will of the people during the conflict termination phase. The Operational Commander who therefore anticipates an occupational role may likely place greater emphasis on minimizing collateral damage throughout the war.

Furthermore, if a future Operational Commander should lead a "Coalition of the Willing" into an enemy country with an objective of *replacing* an existing regime (for example, North Korea), then he should plan for the more difficult conflict termination scenario of being treated as occupiers. Additionally, he should look for opportunities to preserve as much of the original government as reasonable to reduce the political competence burden associated with establishing a postwar enemy government.

Lastly, discussions of conflict termination in Joint Doctrine should be expanded to apply the three levels of warfare, linking political and military responsibilities as appropriate. Applicable documents include Joint Publication 3-0 <u>Doctrine for Joint Operations</u> (sections I.7, III.5.n, IV.6, and Glossary); Joint Publication 5-00.1 <u>Joint Doctrine for Campaign</u>

<u>Planning</u> (sections II.2.c, II.4.d.Branches and Sequels, and Glossary); and Joint Publication 5-00.2 <u>Joint Planning Guidance and Procedures</u> (sections IV.4.e, IX.11, IX.12, and Glossary).

Joint Military Operations

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- <sup>i</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, On War (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1989), 90-91.
- <sup>ii</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, <u>Doctrine For Joint Operations</u>, Joint Publication 3-0, (Washington, DC: Sep 10, 2001), I-10.
- iii James McPherson, <u>Battle Cry of Freedom; The Civil War</u> (New York: Ballantine Books 1988), 657-659.
  - <sup>iv</sup> Howard, The Franco-Prussian War (London and New York: Routledge 1989), 221.
  - <sup>v</sup> Ibid., 221-222.
  - vi Ibid., 222-223.
  - vii Ibid., 223.
- viii Saki Dockrill, <u>From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima: The Second World War In Asia And The Pacific</u>, 1941-1945, 204.
- ix Clausewitz, 89. The Clausewitzian triangle is a commonly used shorthand for Clausewitz's trinity. Clausewitz described war as "a paradoxical trinity composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone... The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the *people*; the second the commander and his *army*; the third the *government*." [emphasis added]
  - <sup>x</sup> Ibid., 159.
  - xi Ibid., 75.
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  - xxv Anver Offer, The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1989), 74.
  - xxvi Schmitt, 288.
  - xxvii Ibid., 288-289.
  - xxviii Ibid., 294.
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#### **APPENDIX A**

#### **EMPEROR HIROHITO'S SURRENDER BROADCAST**

At noon on 15 August, 1945, the Japanese Emperor, His Imperial Majesty Hirohito, had his surrender notification transmitted via radio throughout Japan:

To our good and loyal subjects: After pondering deeply the general trends of the world and the actual conditions obtaining in our empire today, we have decided to effect a settlement of the present situation by resorting to an extraordinary measure.

We have ordered our Government to communicate to the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, China and the Soviet Union that our empire accepts the provisions of their joint declaration.

To strive for the common prosperity and happiness of all nations as well as the security and well-being of our subjects is the solemn obligation which has been handed down by our imperial ancestors and which we lay close to the heart.

Indeed, we declared war on America and Britain out of our sincere desire to insure Japan's self-preservation and the stabilization of East Asia, it being far from our thought either to infringe upon the sovereignty of other nations or to embark upon territorial aggrandizement.

But now the war has lasted for nearly four years. Despite the best that has been done by everyone--the gallant fighting of our military and naval forces, the diligence and assiduity of out servants of the State and the devoted service of our 100,000,000 people--the war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage, while the general trends of the world have all turned against her interest.

Moreover, the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is, indeed, incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. Should we continue to fight, it would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization.

Such being the case, how are we to save the millions of our subjects, nor to atone ourselves before the hallowed spirits of our imperial ancestors? This is the reason why we have ordered the acceptance of the provisions of the joint declaration of the powers.

We cannot but express the deepest sense of regret to our allied nations of East Asia, who have consistently cooperated with the Empire toward the emancipation of East Asia.

The thought of those officers and men as well as others who have fallen in the fields of battle, those who died at their posts of duty, or those who met death [otherwise] and all their bereaved families, pains our heart night and day.

The welfare of the wounded and the war sufferers and of those who lost their homes and livelihood is the object of our profound solicitude. The hardships and sufferings to which our nation is to be subjected hereafter will be certainly great.

We are keenly aware of the inmost feelings of all of you, our subjects. However, it is according to the dictates of time and fate that we have resolved to pave the way for a grand peace for all the generations to come by enduring the [unavoidable] and suffering what is unsufferable [sic]. Having been able to save \*\*\* and maintain the structure of the Imperial State, we are always with you, our good and loyal subjects, relying upon your sincerity and integrity.

Beware most strictly of any outbursts of emotion that may engender needless complications, of any fraternal contention and strife that may create confusion, lead you astray and cause you to lose the confidence of the world.

Let the entire nation continue as one family from generation to generation, ever firm in its faith of the imperishableness of its divine land, and mindful of its heavy burden of responsibilities, and the long road before it. Unite your total strength to be devoted to the construction for the future. Cultivate the ways of rectitude, nobility of spirit, and work with resolution so that you may enhance the innate glory of the Imperial State and keep pace with the progress of the world.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Emperor Hirohito, Accepting the Potsdam Declaration, Radio Broadcast. [online]; available from http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/hirohito.htm; Internet; accessed 10 May 2004.